



Borough of Great Torrington

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

and the

Borough Surveyor and
Public Health Inspector

For the Year ending
31st December, 1967

Public Health Staff.

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Committees:

**HOUSING, SANITARY, BUILDING and
IMPROVEMENTS, SPECIAL SEWERAGE.**

Council Offices,
6, Halsdon Terrace,
Great Torrington.

Mr. Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors,

We have pleasure in presenting our report for the year ending 31st December, 1967.

The year was a very healthy one. There was no major epidemic.

The corrected birth rate was 19.5 per 1,000 population: that for the whole of England and Wales was 17.2 - this is another fall in the national birth rate, but a rise in our own.

The corrected death rate was 9.8 per 1,000 population: the figure for the whole of England and Wales was 11.2.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

C. F. R. BRIGGS,

Medical Officer of Health.

P. F. R. E. SYMONS,

Public Health Inspector and Surveyor.

Borough of Great Torrington

1967

CHIEF INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS.

Abattoir.	Agriculture.	Agricultural Engineering.
Cattle Breeding Centre.	Glass Factory.	Glove Making.
Milk Factory.	Plastics Factory.	

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (statute acres)	...	...	...	...	...	3,592
Mid-year Population (official estimate)	...	...	...	...	...	2,920
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	1,094
(Number of Council-owned Houses)	...	...	...	...	...	288
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£94,312
Product of Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	£331	12s. 6d.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Year	Mid-year Population	Corrected Birth Rate	Corrected Death Rate
1967	2,920	19.5	9.8
1966	2,880	14.9	14.4
1965	2,880	15.7	12.5
1964	2,880	14.6	13.3
1963	2,860	15.0	12.1

BIRTHS

Live Births				Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	...	...	...	29	18	47
Illegitimate	...	...	...	1	2	3

Comparability factor for births—1.19

		England & Wales
Corrected birth rate per 1,000 population	19.5	17.2
The falling birth rate in England and Wales has now reached its lowest level since 1960.		

Still Births

There were no still births.

For the whole of England and Wales the stillbirth rate per 1,000 total live and still births was 14.8.

Infant Mortality		Male	Female	Total
Deaths of infants under 1 year		1	—	1
(This baby was deformed at birth, and died at the age of eight days.)				
		England & Wales		
Rate per 1,000 live births	20			18.3

The infant mortality in England and Wales again fell in 1967 to a record low rate.

Maternal Mortality

There were no maternal deaths.

The total number of births which took place in the Borough was 88, - 45 boys and 43 girls. Of these, 81 took place in the Cottage Hospital which was open for maternity patients all the year. Maternity patients came to us from Torrington Borough and Rural District, from Bideford Borough and Rural District, and from the Rural Districts of Barnstaple, Holsworthy, and Okehampton.

					Male	Female	Total
DEATHS	...	...	...	...	20	27	47
Comparability factor for deaths—0.61							

					England & Wales		
Corrected death rate per 1,000 population					9.8		12.3

Causes of Death					Male	Female
Syphilitic disease	...	...	...	...	—	1
Cancer of stomach	...	...	...	...	1	—
Cancer of lung	...	...	...	...	3	1
Cancer of breast	...	...	...	...	—	1
Cancer, other	...	...	...	...	1	3
Leukaemia	...	...	...	...	1	1
Vascular disease of nervous system - apoplexy					2	4
Coronary disease, angina	...	...	...	...	5	3
Other heart disease	...	...	...	...	1	6
Other circulatory disease	...	...	...	...	—	1
Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	—	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	1	—
Kidney disease	...	...	...	...	1	1
Other disease	...	...	...	...	4	3
Accidents not involving motor vehicles	...	...	...	...	—	1
Total all causes	...	...	...	...	20	27

Cancer of the Lung

One death in every twelve was due to cancer of the lung. In this connection we cannot over-emphasise the dangers of cigarette-smoking.

Cancer of the Uterus

Screening is available for all women over the age of 35.

Age at Death Table

<i>Age at Death</i>						Male	Female
Under 4 weeks	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
4 weeks — 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
1—4 years	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
5—14	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
15—24	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
25—34	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
35—44	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
45—54	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
55—64	...	...	...	...	...	5	3
65—74	...	...	...	...	...	10	7
75—84	...	...	...	...	...	4	10
85 and over	...	...	...	...	...	—	7
Average age at death						65	74

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

There was no major epidemic during the year.

There was an outbreak of mumps during the spring—this is not a notifiable disease. The following cases of infectious disease were notified :-

Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	9
Measles	...	...	...	...	7
Erysipelas	...	...	...	...	3
Scarlet fever	...	...	...	...	2

These figures are the lowest for many years.

Tuberculosis

No new case was notified during the year.

The following cases were on the register at the end of the year :—

	Male	Female
Pulmonary	3	1
Non-pulmonary	--	2

These are the lowest figures for very many years. A unit of the Mass Radiography Service visits Barnstaple and Bideford every fortnight, and the general public are free to attend.

Venereal Disease

No case has come to our notice for many years. There are facilities for treatment in Barnstaple.

MATERNITY, NURSING and OTHER HEALTH SERVICES

Maternity patients are cared for by their own doctors and by the District Nurse/Midwife. Milk and vitamins are available for them at reduced cost. Relaxation and mothercraft classes are held every fortnight. Full equipment is available to the Nurse for maternity as well as for general nursing in the home. Home helps are obtained where needed. Most of our mothers had their babies in the Cottage Hospital: there were seven home confinements.

The other health clinics have been run along the same lines as in previous years.

MEALS ON WHEELS.

Arrangements have continued as in previous years. On average 40 meals each week were served throughout the year.

AMBULANCE SERVICE.

The mileage covered by the Torrington ambulance during 1967 was the highest ever recorded.

Patients carried in 1967	...	...	806
Total mileage ... ..	...	...	17,947

TORRINGTON COTTAGE HOSPITAL.

	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963
Patients admitted during the year	216	194	130	133	150
New out-patients 	355	299	210	293	370
Total out-patient attendances ...	891	817	736	598	670
Births 	81	56	1	—	18

The 1967 figures are the highest ever recorded for the Cottage Hospital.

NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION SERVICE.

The South Western Division of the National Blood Transfusion Service visited Torrington twice during the year. A total of 167 donations of blood were made — 98 by men and 69 by women. This was the first year in which the Service visited Torrington twice.

	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963
Total donations:—	167	103	84	77	64

RAINFALL.

Details of rainfall during recent years are as follows :—

	1967	1966	1965	1964
January ...	2.78	3.13	6.86	0.85
February ...	4.93	4.59	0.09	1.81
March ...	2.47	1.40	3.50	2.72
April ...	1.32	5.34	2.66	1.74
May ...	4.09	2.81	2.80	2.65
June ...	0.66	2.77	3.33	1.29
July ...	1.90	2.06	4.41	2.53
August ...	2.46	3.77	3.35	2.67
September ...	4.96	2.23	4.85	1.93
October ...	10.28	4.84	1.28	4.88
November ...	3.39	3.08	5.79	4.80
December ...	4.16	5.03	9.96	5.47
Total ...	43.40	41.03	48.88	33.34

The October total of 10.28 inches is the highest monthly figure recorded since 1903 when 10.77 inches was recorded in one month.

Rainfall figures are kept by Mr. C. Bangham at the sewage disposal works.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The sewage disposal works and the sewage pumping stations continue to function well. The new pumping station at Calvesford is in operation.

Considerable trouble was experienced early in the year with a length of sewer on the south side of Well Street. Road grit and silt had accumulated in the sewer over a period of years and great difficulty was experienced in clearing same. This is a problem which will arise from time to time where there is a combined system for foul and storm water disposal. Generally, the sewerage system is very good.

FACTORIES ACT, 1961. Part I of the Act.

1 **INSPECTIONS** for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors)

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspections (3)	Written notices (4)	Occupiers prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ..	3	—	—	—
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	19	6	—	—
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises)	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	22	6	NIL	NIL

2—CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	Number of cases in which defects were found			Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector By H.M. Inspector	

Overcrowding (S.2)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
(a) Insufficient	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
(b) Unsuitable or defective	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
(c) Not separate for sexes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTAL	...	...	...	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL

OUTWORK—(Sections 133 and 134). Part VIII of the Act.

Nature of Work	Section 133			Section 134		
	No. of out-workers in August list required by Sect. 133 (1) (c) (2)	No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council (3)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists (4)	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises (5)	Notices served (6)	Prosecutions (7)
(1)	137	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL
Wearing apparel, Making, etc.						

WATER SUPPLY.

No shortage of water has occurred for domestic purposes, but use of hoses was restricted for quite a long period.

24 Samples were taken at irregular intervals in different parts of the town and all gave satisfactory results.

The main supply to Torrington is from a combination of all North Devon Water Board's main sources viz: Wistlandpound, Taw Marsh and Prewley. In dry weather the supply is augmented from the local source at Blackaton.

The water contains no deleterious substances and is not plumbo-solvent. Fluorine is absent.

HOUSING.

Plans to provide accommodation for key industrial workers and to continue to meet general housing needs have begun to achieve results. Four bungalows and fourteen flats were built and placed at the disposal of Dartington Glass Ltd. for the special needs of their Swedish workers. In addition, fourteen two-bedroomed flats and six three-bedroomed houses were completed in 1967, all at Dartington Fields. Current housing requirements of the new industries in Torrington were met, and the waiting list for Council houses reduced. With the improvement in the housing situation the opportunity was taken to re-house the three tenants from Sydney House so that the extension of South Street car park could proceed.

It is appropriate, we think, to comment that the housing development at Dartington Fields with its pleasing outward appearance and high standards of interior planning and equipment are a credit to the Borough and reflect the Council's forward-looking attitude. Progressive policies not only earn their own commendations for a Council, but provide encouragement to its officers.

The momentum of house building recorded above is expected to continue through 1968, with the completion of contracts at Dartington Fields and the commencement of further building elsewhere. Whilst the housing of key workers will remain a priority, it is hoped that the Council's first scheme for grouped old peoples' dwellings with warden supervision will take shape; another imaginative project is the inclusion of a self-service launderette at Dartington Fields. Torrington Council will be the only local authority West of Bristol which provides and controls such a public service.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT 1949.

A full-time operator is still employed jointly by the Borough and Rural District Councils.

Regular inspection of properties is carried out and the few complaints are promptly dealt with, consequently it is very rare that any serious infestation is found.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

A large abattoir has been built within the Borough and slaughtering commenced in September. Four full-time meat inspectors were appointed but this number was found to be insufficient during peak periods or absence due to holidays and sickness; a fifth student inspector has now been engaged.

The number of animals slaughtered is high and this is reflected in Table A below. Table B gives details of other foods condemned.

TABLE A.

Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part.

	<i>Cattle excluding Cows</i>	<i>Cows</i>	<i>Calves</i>	<i>Sheep and Lambs</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
Number killed	4303	154	97	40,292	12,313
Number inspected	4303	154	97	40,292	12,313
All Diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticercosis					
Whole carcasses condemned	6	13	15	107	11
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	2758	134	5	4,492	4,224
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuber- culosis and Cysticercosis	64.23	95.45	20.62	11.41	34.39
Tuberculosis					
Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	—	—	—	—	250
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	—	—	—	—	2.03
Cysticercosis					
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	7	—	—	—	—
Carcases submitted to treat- ment by refrigeration	7	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE B.

Details of other foodstuffs condemned during the year.

<i>Food</i>	<i>Reason for Condemnation</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
1 Tin Peeled Tomatoes	Tin blown	8 ozs.
1 Tin of Fruit Salad	„ „	1 lb. 14 ozs.
5 Tins of Full Cream Evaporated Milk	Tins Blown	10 pints
2 Tins of Ox Tongue	Decomposition	10½ lbs.
1 Tin of Cooked Ham	Tin punctured	9 lbs.
1 Tin Chopped Pork	Decomposition	4 lbs.

THE OFFICES, SHOPS & RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963.

Appendix I—Prescribed Statistical Information
TABLE A—REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS

Class of Premises (1)	Number of premises regis- tered during the year (2)	Total number of registered pre- mises at end of year (3)	Number of registered pre- mises receiving a general inspection dur- ing the year (4)
Offices	—	6	4
Retail Shops	2	25	4
Wholesale Shops, Warehouses	—	—	—
Catering Establishments open to the public, canteens	—	2	1
Fuel Storage Depots	—	—	—
TOTALS	2	33	9

**TABLE B—NUMBER OF VISITS OF ALL KINDS BY INSPECTORS TO
REGISTERED PREMISES**

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**TABLE C—ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGISTERED
PREMISES BY WORKPLACE**

Class of Workplace (1)	Number of Persons Employed (2)
Offices	31
Retails Shops	77
Wholesale Departments, Warehouses	—
Catering Establishments open to the public	11
Canteens	—
Fuel Storage Depots	—
TOTAL	119
TOTAL MALES	52
TOTAL FEMALES	67

SUMMARY OF VISITS AND INSPECTIONS MADE DURING THE YEAR.

Allotments and Fields	...	...	...	...	21
Building Regulations and Planning Matters	...				74
Caravan Sites	...	...	...	...	2
Cattle and Pannier Markets	...	...	...		32
Cemetery and Churchyard	...	...	...		67
Disinfection & Disinfestation	...	...	...		9
Drain Testing and Inspecting	...	...	...		24
Factories	...	...	...	...	6
Fireworks Storage	...	...	...	...	3
Food Premises and Food Inspection	...	...			30
Housing	...	...	...	...	909
Improvement Grants	...	...	...	...	71
Industrial Development	...	...	...	...	48
Meat Inspection	...	...	...	...	156
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	28
New Building Work	...	...	...	...	42
Nuisances (including obstructed drains)	...				30
Offices, Shop & Railway Premises Act	...				14
Petroleum Licensing and Storage	...	...			3
Playing Field	...	...	...	...	19
Public Conveniences	...	...	...	...	10
Refuse Collection and Disposal	...	...			20
Rodent Control	...	...	...	...	2
Sewerage and Sewage Disposal	...	...			136
Street Lighting	...	...	...	...	24
Water	...	...	...	...	1
Total					1,781

